

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 071127

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:BCROGERS:JR

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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FOL REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 3641 SENT ACTION ATHENS

INFO SECSTATE APR 02

QTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 3641

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC PINS ET

SUBJECT: TENNECO HELICOPTER GROUP

1. BECAUSE OF DESIRABILITY NOT PUBLICIZE DETAILS RELATING TO CAPTURE OF TENNECO HELICOPTER GROUP, REQUEST YOU PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM TENNECO'S GENERAL MANAGER IN ETHIOPIA, ED BURTCHAE LL TO MR. S. V. MCCOLLUM, TENNECO VICE PRESIDENT, NOW STAYING AT HILTON HOTEL ATHENS.

2. THE FOLLOWING ARE TWO LETTERS OR MESSAGES WHICH WERE PHYSICAL- LY RECEIVED BY ME TODAY. WE KNEW OF THE CONTENTS EARLIER. ONE IS FROM THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT AND IT SAYS: "MARCH 28, 1974. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT. HELI- COPTER CANWEST AVIATION NBR. 3153, DATE 26-3-1974 AT 9:00 O'CLOCK WAS ATTACKED BY THE ERITREAN LIBERATION ARMY. THEY ARE ONE PILOT AND FOUR OTHERS FOR THIS ARMY ANNOUNCE. FOR ANY SAFETY OF THESE CIVILIAN ANY MILITARY ATTACK UPON THE ERITREAN CIVILIAN

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PEOPLE AND ERITREAN ARMY IS VERY RISKY FOR THE LIFE OF THESE

MEN. AND ALSO FOR THEIR SAFETY AND GUARDIAN OF THESE MEN SHOULD HAVE TO CONTACT OPENLY WITH ELF. THEY ARE TWO CANADIANS AND THREE AMERICANS. FOR YOUR REMIND WE LIKE TO SENT THEIR REMARKS ATTACHED WITH THIS LETTER. ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT IN THE FIELD."

3. THE SECOND IS A LETTER FROM THE MEN. IT WAS WRITTEN BY ROGERS AS I RECOGNIZE HIS HANDWRITING. THE LETTER WAS SIGNED BY ALL THE MEN. THEY SIGNED ABOVE THEIR PRINTED NAMES. THE LETTER READS: "MARCH 28, 1974. TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN AND THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. WE ARE BEING HELD BY A UNIT OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT. WE ARE BEING WELL CARED FOR AND WE ARE IN GOOD CONDITION MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY. THE TIME AND PLACE OF OUR RELEASE IS UNKNOWN. WE ARE INFORMED BY OUR CAPTORS THAT ANY ACTION AGAINST THE ERITREAN PEOPLE OR THE ERITREAN LIBERATION WILL RESULT IN GRAVE DANGER TO OURSELVES. FURTHER, FOR OUR SAFETY AND WELL BEING ANY CONTACT MADE IN OUR BEHALF BY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, TENNECO, OR OTHERS SHOULD BE MADE OPENLY IN THE ETHIOPIAN HERALD, THE ASMARA NEWSPAPER OR OTHER LOCAL OR INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL. J.W. ROGERS, BILL CAJCE, C.M. JONES, MATTI TAVELA, D. WEDERFORT."

4. A DELEGATION WAS SENT IN AFTER THE LETTERS WERE WRITTEN TO ASSURE THE GROUP HOLDING THE PARTY THAT THE CONDITIONS THEY HAD REQUESTED WOULD BE MET. THE ARMY IS BEING HELD OUT OF THE AREA AND WE CHECKING ON THIS TO MAKE SURE THE ARMY STAYS AWAY.

5. A STATEMENT PROBABLY MAY BE MADE TONIGHT, CIRCA 1800 HOURS LOCAL TIME TO THE PRESS AND AN ANNOUNCEMENT OVER THE RADIO CONFIRMING THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE LETTERS AND THAT THE TERMS THEY REQUEST ARE BEING AGREED TO. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT THINK THIS IS NECESSARY SINCE A DELEGATION HAS ALREADY CARRIED THIS WORD INTO THE GROUP HOLDING OUR MEN, BUT WE WANT TO BE SURE WE COMPLY WITH ALL REQUESTS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO THIS. WYMAN

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